

C O P Y

March 17, 1964

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I urge the House to reconsider and approve legislation to increase pay levels of Government employees. If the pay raise is not enacted, it will

- deprive 2 million Federal workers of fair and reasonable pay adjustments;
- make it difficult to recruit and retain top-flight men and women;
- impair my efforts to achieve true economy in government.

Specifically, failure to take this action will

- undercut the principle and the promise of comparable pay -- Federal career pay scales comparable to those in private enterprise -- adopted by the Congress just a year and a half ago in the historic Federal Salary Reform Act of 1962;
- thwart our efforts to strengthen professional and technical leadership and step up the productivity of Federal workers. Competence is the keystone of that program. Fair salaries are vital to attract and hold competent people.
- make it harder than ever to recruit and hold the outstanding people we need for our top policy jobs. They already earn less -- often far less -- than they did earn, or could earn, in private jobs. This salary gap has been growing. The proposed bill will not close it. But it will reverse a dangerous trend.
- jeopardize increases in military pay which I have recommended to keep Armed Forces pay generally in line with nonmilitary salaries;
- renew pressures for the old approach of flat percentage increases for postal and other career workers. Such increases destroy a fair and rational pay system.

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Every cent for these increases is already included in my budget for Fiscal Year 1965 -- the smallest budget, in proportion to our national output, since 1951.

Congress and the country surely support my determined drive for economy in Government. To make that policy work, I need first-class managers -- who can tighten organizations, simplify procedures, trim waste, and inspire maximum effort. It is false economy to offer salaries that will attract the mediocre but repel the talented. Business, foundations, universities, State and local governments are all learning that lesson -- or already have.

If Congressmen feel they should postpone increasing their salaries until next year, even though they are most deserving of an increase in pay, there is no reason to postpone equitable and just action for others who serve the Government and the Nation.

I need your help in my program to get a dollar's worth of value for every dollar's worth of pay -- and the dollars paid to attract brains and ability to the Federal service will come back to the American people many times over in more economical and effective government.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Honorable Carl Hayden, President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

Sincerely,

/s/ Lyndon B. Johnson

The Honorable John W. McCormack
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

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